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ABSTRACT

By analyzing the survey responses of almost 600 fifth and sixth graders, this study points to existing discrepancies between what most public librarians consider a young adult and what the youths consider themselves. Building on past research in the field of education, the writer points out that schools have done much to examine the phenomena of early adolescence and, as a result, have in many cases changed the structure and content of their fifth and sixth grades to meet their particular--and changing--needs. Parallel research in the field of public libraries shows no such suggested changes and the results of this study go on to suggest that perhaps some are needed. According to these survey results, more than 80% of the students said they would prefer to use the Young Adult room in a public library, even though that department does not usually cater to patrons under 13 years of age. These 10- through 12-year-olds went on to list the most recent titles they had checked out for pleasure, and nearly half of those ended up being classified into a department "older" than the one into which these youths are thought to fit. The survey questionnaires, letters of permission, and a list of titles selected by survey respondents are appended. (30 references; 11 figures) (Author/MAB)

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ED340374

ARE YOUNG ADULTS GETTING YOUNGER?

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Catherine Hakala-Ausperk

April, 1991

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Master's Research Paper by

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B.A., Kent State University, 1978

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1991

Approved by

Adviser Dorothy J. Bruder Date 4-3-91

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With special thanks to
Patrick Jones and Gayle Brun

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, much research in the field of education has focused on the ever-changing developmental needs of the pre-adolescent. Called "neither child nor adolescent but rather someone in transition between these two more stable conditions,"[1] these youngsters have served as catalysts to a "major innovation in American education"[2] - the middle school. And, faced with today's complex society, these students - and their schools - are still changing.

While not quite in junior high but almost out of grammar school, students in this quandry of middle childhood are perhaps the most demanding group any institution - including a library - can hope to serve. If their needs can be considered a reflection of the intensive changes they are undergoing then they are indeed formidable, including as they do "the dramatic conjunction of rapid biological, social, emotional and cognitive changes."[3] While some might argue that these challenges are not new and have been facing youths for centuries, others would point to expert claims that those grappling with them today are younger than ever before.

Indeed, "records indicate that the onset of puberty has occurred four months earlier every decade since 1940."[4] What that can mean, then, is that "biologically, today's young adolescents are approximately two years in advance of the young people for whom the first junior high schools in America were established."[5]

Library professionals, too, have noted that differences exist in younger patrons being served today and mention of it can be found within the literature. In 1989, noted commentator Audrey B. Eaglen stated that youth services librarians need to "recognize and accept that the world in which today's young people are living is a different one from that in which we grew up."[6]

Across the nation, educators are beginning to respond to these changes not only by enhancing the middle schools already in existence (commonly sixth through eighth grade centers) but also by creating a new setting to provide even earlier preparation-the upper elementary school for fifth and sixth graders. No matter what they are called, though, all of these schools have but one purpose - to help the early adolescent through a very difficult time.

As one district committee reported in arguments to open such a school, "The Carnegie Council for Adolescent Development states that 'middle grade schools, junior high, intermediate and middle schools - are potentially society's most powerful force to recapture millions of youth adrift,

and help every young person thrive during early adolescence."[7]

Just as contemporary educators have studied, pondered and acted upon these dynamic phenomenon in the lives of the children they serve, perhaps librarians should also take on the task of considering whether they have kept up with the times or need perhaps to re-evaluate what they have to offer this newly sophisticated group of patrons. The Carnegie Council's Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents shared this view.

"The early adolescent years are crucial in determining the future success or failure of millions of American youth," it explained. "We call upon youth-serving and community organizations, many with significant experience in working with young adolescents, to develop or strengthen their partnerships with middle grade schools."[8]

Explains one youth services librarian, in most present-day facilities, "libraries and their librarians use the term 'young adult' in order to be able to plan, budget and evaluate services for a specific age group, usually based on the configuration of their local schools. This has left our specialty with a bewildering service range that spans ages from 10 to 21." [9]

Many problems exist with such a library system, just as they existed within the schools and eventually resulted in the re-configurations being implemented

today. For one thing, it "fails to contend with the complex, sensitive issues surrounding the fact that age and developmental realities do not always match."[10]

The results reported herein will hopefully open the door to improvements in existing guidelines for libraries serving early adolescents so that these inequities, if they exist, can be better met. While it cannot answer all the questions needed before major changes can take place, it will hopefully answer at least one - whether change in the library is needed at all.

While individual age limitations vary for departments in libraries overall, juvenile boundaries are generally considered to include children up to twelve or thirteen-years-of-age, while young adult departments tend to focus their attentions on those from about thirteen to seventeen or eighteen years old.

In actuality, this structure is also in conflict with the generalizations made about young adult services by the American Library Association. In a statement that supports the overall theme of this project, the ALA explained that "since one of the main purposes of young adult services must be to enable young people to cross the bridge between children's library services and the adult library, these services must cater to some young people who begin to feel uneasy or dissatisfied with the service offered by the

children's library at the age of 11 or 12 and to others who still need this support at the age of 17 or 18.

"It is at some point between 11 and 18," the report continued, that "young people move from childhood to adulthood (where) the physiological changes of puberty are accompanied by changes in attitudes, in interests and in relation to others...Services to young adults must take account of these changes, as well as serve to encourage young people to go on using library services at a period when they might otherwise drift away from the library, perhaps because they feel they are too old for the children's library but at the same time are overwhelmed by the resources of the adult collection."[11]

Historically, though, whether by design to control access to particular parts of a collection or by accident, actual age distinctions for young adult departments have rarely reflected this ALA opinion.

For example, in the Cuyahoga County Public Library system, which will be a part of this study, age parameters for the YA department are currently 13 to 17 years-of-age,[12] even though a recent survey of its younger patrons indicated that "more than half"[13] thought 11 is actually the age that young adulthood begins.

II. OBJECTIVES

What this study will do is examine, by looking at one particular school district and the public library system that serves it, whether historical boundaries still accurately reflect library use by this age group.

Survey data will be analyzed in an attempt to answer several basic research questions:

1. Are pre and/or early adolescent 10 to 12-year-olds checking out material considered by the public library that buys it to fit into the juvenile or young adult category?
2. Given a preference, would these youths, by choice, prefer to use the children's or young adult's room in a public library? And,
3. Do any of these figures fluctuate based on age, sex or grade and, if so, is there any reason to change or implement policy to respond to any or all of these phenomenon?

Once a library decides what age level distinctions will exist between its various departments, several consequences are bound to result. Staff size, physical size (ie. floor space) and collection and service budgets are just some of the resultant policies these divisions are ultimately responsible for.

If the results of this study indicate that the 10 to 12-year-olds surveyed are actually using a department different from the one it has been assumed they were using, then perhaps some of those more specific questions of internal design will need to be addressed.

It will be the objective of this study to take one focused look at a group of youths in the pre-adolescent years

and gain some insight into what level of library service would best suit their modern needs. Do they still, as librarians have thought for so long, consider themselves juveniles? Or have time, their schools and a more complex world changed them in such a way that libraries, too, will have to change to keep up.

In other words, are young adults getting younger?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much research has been done, as stated earlier, to examine the changes pre-adolescents go through and how children facing those changes today differ from their counterparts of ten or twenty years ago. While pointing overwhelmingly to the added stress and pressures these youngsters face and must overcome, available research heartily chronicles and applauds the changes undertaken so far by the schools to be of help. The goal of these services, it would seem, is "better articulation...or transition or bridging (and) to provide for better continuity"[14] for children as they grow.

What is harder to find is research supporting the notion that libraries are attempting to do the same thing. Libraries are, it should be argued, always looking at ways to improve divisional services as they currently exist. Many studies, like Whimbey's "A 15th Grade Reading Level for High School Seniors?"[15] have been published on how better to serve children in regards to specific areas like computer sciences,

booktalks and reading.

Individually, librarians like Baskin, Carter and Harris in "The Search for Values: Young Adults and the Literay Experience,"[16] have conducted and analyzed research on educational change, learning readiness and socialization for this age group. But, it would seem, few of their results have called for any structural changes to the distinctions between age levels.

In one 1983 report of such a study, Margaret Harding investigated the reasons for what she called "the apparent loss of interest of seventh graders in the public library."[17] Through a survey of her own, Harding attempted to uncover specific reasons for this apparent loss of interest but came up with only a few specific suggestions for changing the services - not the divisions themselves.

She did report, however, that at least one possible explanation for the dissatisfaction was that "the collection of materials (for the sixth and seventh graders) was housed with the 'little kids' books.

"Young adults of this early age range have a number of problems to deal with, " she continued. "One of them is a wariness of adults. Another is the fear of being thought kiddish."[18]

What librarians should be asking themselves, perhaps, based on the possibility that problems like these exist, is

no matter how intent their juvenile departments try to be in providing materials and services to help these youths bridge gaps outside of school, what good can they be doing if the students are not using the materials at all? And, if these patrons do consider themselves too old to use the "children's room" and tend to seek materials instead from the young adult collection, how prepared is that facet of the staff to serve these younger needs?

And, worse yet, if these pre-teens are indeed wandering into the young adult areas in search of materials, what are they finding...or not finding and how will that affect their views of libraries in the future?

That a group of patrons exists with needs that seem to fall in between established boundaries seems impossible to question, based on research to be further described in this project. Whether or not libraries today are equipped to deal with them is what will hopefully become known.

In Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century, The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development presented a plea that public organizations like libraries begin doing their part to help these novice and impressionable youths through a difficult time in their development.

> "Youth-serving agencies can become partners in a broader system of youth development, and can assume responsibility for key elements of a transformed school program. These agencies and organizations can develop programs aimed specifically at attracting young people from middle grade schools after school, on weekends, and

> during the summer, when young adolescents are full of energy and may be most vulnerable to the negative pressures of peers or to undesirable adult influences."[19]

This research will hopefully form a foundation for the establishment of just those kinds of services to early adolescents via public libraries. By examining what ten to twelve-year-old fifth and sixth graders both actually read and would choose to read if given the option, it will hopefully substantiate the assumption that, as far as this group of patrons is concerned, a blend of juvenile and young adult services might just be the "middle school" that public libraries need.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to collect the data necessary to answer these research questions, this study surveyed (see Appendix A) the approximately 600 fifth and sixth graders at Greenview Upper Elementary School in South Euclid, Ohio.

Greenview, a part of the South Euclid-Lyndhurst City School District, has an enrollment of 602 students, according to the QED State-by-State School Guide 1990-1991: Ohio. Enrollment districtwide is 4,101 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The district operates with a budget of slightly more than $24 million and has a per-student expenditure of almost $6,000.[20] Based on a perfect 100 (of a possible 1 to 100) Effective Schools Index Score, which is

computed through an evaluative, statistical profile, the system overall earned an 86.[21] Opened in the 1990-91 school year, Greenview is operated as a center exclusively for fifth and sixth graders.[22]

The questionnaire the Greenview students filled out included several specially designed aspects. Birthdate was included to determine each respondent's exact age since, for one reason or another, it is possible to have a fifth or sixth grader who is older than 11 or younger than 10.

In order to make certain the titles listed (and their corresponding age levels) were selected by personal choice and not due to homework needs, it was decided to remind the students not to include materials that were a required part of a particular school assignment.

The author's name was requested in case the title alone seemed unclear and the data, therefore, was rendered useless. It was thought that, might the author's name be provided, more direct matches could be found in the library's catalog. The sex and grade of the respondent were also requested since it was decided that comparing the data based on these groups might provide an interesting way of gauging which young adults are changing faster.

Finally, the students were asked to choose either a juvenile or young adult room as the one in which they would most enjoy browsing in a public library. It was decided that, quite possibly, many students who would actually prefer

to use young adult materials simply do not because they think they should not. This question was designed to circumvent that assumption, see if it exists, and pinpoint directly which collection would be preferred.

Permission to conduct this survey was given by a representative of The South Euclid-Lyndhurst City School District (see Appendix B) and by Ms. Gayle Brun, librarian at Greenview (see Appendix C), who assisted in facilitating the research. During a three-week period in December of 1990, Ms. Brun administered the questionnaire to each of the Greenview classes as they passed through her library. Reading from a script to each class (see Appendix D), she gave each student the opportunity to refuse to participate.

Several possible limitations or problems existed that might end up affecting the outcome of this study. In one, students might simply not be able to remember the title of the last book they checked out of a public library or maybe they do not go to a public library at all. Other students might copy answers from their friends' papers so as to seem to be "the same." Two steps were taken to try to control these influences.

To control for the first, a very large sample size was used that hopefully allowed for an accurate picture of the age group. To control for the second, the Greenview librarian was asked to circulate the questionnaires in the same manner for each class, with very little "fanfare" before

hand and by preparing the students by reading the exact same script to each class. Hopefully, this low-key approach made the study seem all that much more inocuous and therefore discouraged foul play on the part of the respondents.

Another pre-existing condition that affected the way the data was analyzed was that, quite often and certainly in the case of the CCPL catalog, young adult titles overlap and are sometimes cross-cataloged with either juvenile or adult collections as well. In order to more faithfully illustrate how many titles outside of the juvenile collection were being used by this patron group, an additional analysis was made whereby all the juvenile-young adult (J/YA), young adult (YA) and adult-young adult (A/YA) titles were totaled, to allow one to see just how many (or how large a percentage) of books outside of the "strictly juvenile" reading area were actually being used.

In order to check the questionnaire for content validity, it was discussed with or read by several specialists with experience in either education or library science or both. They included: Steve Franko, South Euclid-Lyndhurst Board of Education Director of Staff Development and Human Resources; James Makee, Greenview principal; Gayle Brun, Greenview Librarian; Jean Hanson, South Euclid - Lyndhurst Public Library (CCPL) Manager of Children's Services; and Patrick Jones, Mayfield Regional Library (CCPL) Regional Manager of Young Adult Services.

Since Greenview is surrounded by branches of The Cuyahoga County Public Library System, the resulting titles were compared with the CCPL catalog and the specific age department responsible for purchasing and displaying the item was recorded. A system with 27 branches that services more than 160,000 patrons in one of Ohio's most populous counties, CCPL operates with a total budget of just over $26 million.[23]

Five possible categories, which will be further explained later, were created to represent each title provided by the respondents. The titles were found to be either Juvenile (J), Juvenile/Young Adult (J/YA), Young Adult (YA), Young Adult/Adult (YA/A) or Adult (A).

Students were also asked to state a preference for their favorite area of the library (children's or young adult's room) and these results were also tallied and percentages computed. No special explanation was offered as to what makes up a young adult's room or a children's room and it should be understood that, in answering this question, students could have been referring to a number of different branches that surround the Greenview area, each with their own physical set-up and each different in the way it separates the different age levels.

Once the surveys had been completed by the students, they were collected and, individually, examined against the CCPL catalog. A chart was designed with columns for each

of the possible age designations (J, J/YA, YA, YA/A and A) and hashmarks were made, one for each response, in the column appropriate to each answer. These marks were then tabulated and the resulting percentages calculated.

For the second question regarding room preference, another chart was designed with Children's Room listed on one side and Young Adult's Room on the other. Again, hashmarks were made to count each of the responses and then tabulation took place.

Finally, for each of these questions, a count was also taken of responses based on sex, grade and age.

As was mentioned earlier, in some instances, individual titles were placed into more than one age category. That is to say, while some branches might have ordered a book for their juvenile collection, others might have added the same book to their young adult collection. In these cases, the book was tabulated in the J/YA category. In other cases, all holdings but one or two systemwide were assigned to a specific category. It was decided that, if the exceptional listings numbered two or less, then the primary category used was accepted. If the number was three or more, the book was cross-categorized.

Also, for purposes of compiling the bibliography of titles selected (see Appendix F), the most recent hardback edition was used to provide information on the publisher, location and date of publication.

V. RESULTS

Several factors concerning the manner in which this data was analyzed need to be pointed out at this time. As was explained earlier, in order to classify each title as belonging to either J, J/YA, YA, YA/A or A collections, the information provided by the students on the questionnaires was checked against the holdings listed in the CCPL catalog.

Another reason for selecting the most recent edition when extra editions were found, was because it would probably be the most likely to have recently been on the shelf and "found" by the patron. Also, the department to which it was assigned would more closely reflect the "current" views of the system. (For example, a book like Stephen King's Christine, which would probably have been originally cataloged as part of an adult collection, would today and in later editions very likely be included in YA.) Finally, it was also decided that this policy would provide the best consistency for the purposes of the study.

For many of the titles, multiple copies of the most recent edition were owned (in many cases more than 100!) and, in these cases, the researcher checked each copy's designation to make sure there was a concensus. A consensus was considered to exist, as was said earlier, if all but two listings or less were the same. An important advantage of this system was that it provided more of a county-wide accord on classification.

An overall review of the data shows clearly that perhaps the most startling and indisputable conclusion to be drawn concerns whether these youths would prefer to use the children's or young adult's room in a public library (see Table 1). As the figures clearly show, there is no mistaking the fact that, while the titles they were actually selecting were largely from the juvenile collection, the area the students would have preferred to be using was the young adult's room. More will be offered later in an effort to explain this phenomena.

Table 1.--Survey Totals Overall (Percentages rounded off)

	N	#	%
I. DEPARTMENT PREFERENCE	483		
Children's Room		59	12.2
Young Adult's Room		424	87.8
II. TITLES SELECTED	270		
Juvenile (J)		165	61.1
Juvenile/Young Adult (J/YA)		34	12.6
Young Adult (YA)		49	18.1
Young Adult/Adult (YA/A)		7	2.6
Adult (A)		15	5.6
III. TITLES COLLAPSED BY GENERALITY			
Juvenile (J)		165	61.1
Non-Juvenile (J/YA, YA, YA/A, A)		105	38.9

Overall, 483 responses were received concerning room preference. Later, when this figure is analyzed by category, it will be seen that not all questions were answered in regards to describing who exactly made these choices. That is to say, some students provided their age, sex and grade, as well as indicating which room they'd rather use. Others offered some but not all of that data. In reflecting these omissions, the "N" number will change in the results to come.

By a difference of more than 65%, the Greenview students chose the young adult's room over the children's room and, yet, more than half of those indicating a YA preference most recently selected a juvenile title from their public library. Although the "non-juvenile" titles were aptly represented by almost 40% of the students, they still clearly are reading more on their "accepted" age level than above it. Why might this be? Several possible explanations come to mind.

First of all, it is possible that, although they wish they could use the young adult's room in their neighborhood libraries, some students might feel that they are not allowed to. Due to the structure of visits from the public librarians into the schools, perhaps mention is not being made of the services and collection available to the fifth and sixth graders in the young adult's area. This could be either because the library does not feel they belong there or perhaps simply does not realize they might like to.

Another argument some might make is that, although so many students SAY they would like to be reading young adult material, it is simply too far beyond them and so they opt to check out material more suited to their reading levels and aptitudes. Much could be made of both of these arguments and probably many more added in an attempt to explain the results of this study.

But, while those arguments might be worthwhile in further examining these discrepancies, perhaps it would help

to take a closer look at these results and see if, perhaps, some answers might lie in differences between the ages, sex and grades of the Greenview respondents.

Book Categories Selected

Looking first at the categories into which the selected books fit, it is clear to see that irregardless of the age, sex or grade of the respondent, almost the same percentages exist of juvenile titles selected versus non-juvenile (which are all titles that were not from the children's department, whether they were juvenile/young adult, strictly young adult, young adult/adult crossovers or adult titles.)

By age, more juvenile titles were selected than non-juvenile in every age range. The group checking out the

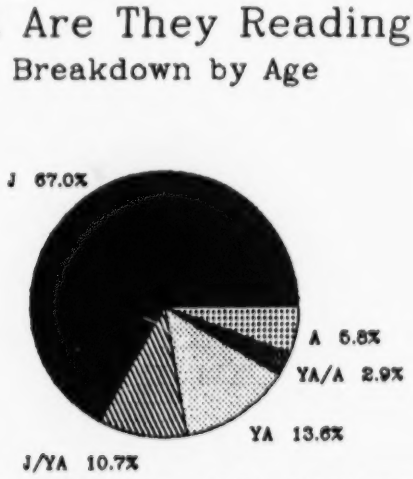


Figure 1. 10-year-olds' Selections

most children's books out was the 10-year-olds (see Fig. 1).

The 11-year-olds checked out the least (see Fig. 2) and the 12-year-olds fell in between (see Fig.3).

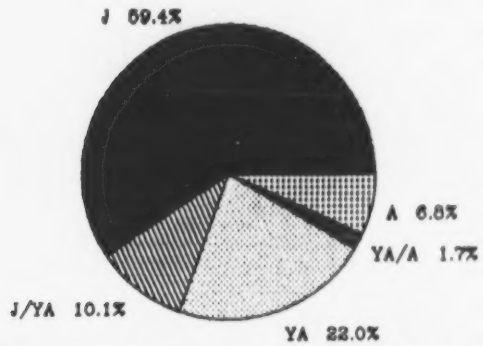


Figure 2. 11-year-olds' Selections

n=118

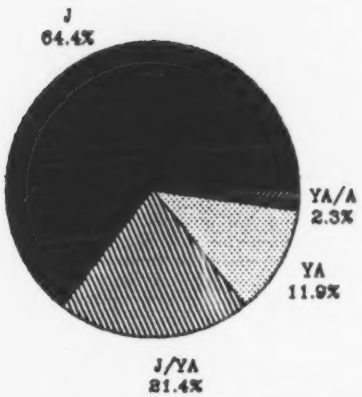


Figure 3. 12-year-olds' Selections

n=42

Interestingly, more children took out books that were strictly considered to be Young Adult than those that were a crossover between the two departments (J/YA).

Overall, the figures for each age group very closely matched the group overall. Where, within the total group, 61.1 percent chose so-called children's books, 67 percent of the 10-year-olds selected them, and 59.3 percent of the 11-year-olds and 64.3 percent of the 12-year-olds did so as well.

There was also very little difference in the responses of the boys and the girls. Only slightly more juvenile titles were selected by girls than by boys (see Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). Again staying very close to the total group breakdowns, with boys choosing 65.4% J and girls 56%.

Breakdown by Sex

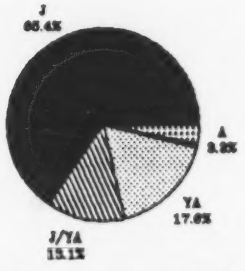


Fig.4. Girls (n=153)

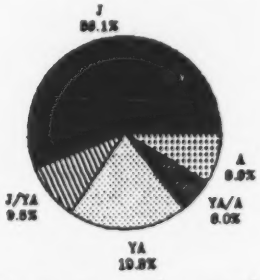
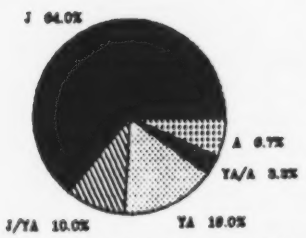


Fig.5. Boys (n=116)

The only real difference in this category seemed to affect the books that were considered to be much older, that is either a cross between young adult and adult or strictly adult. In those areas, the boys chose more titles, 6% to .6% in the YA/A area and 8.6% to 3.3% in the adult area.

By grade, the figures were even closer to each other and to the overall totals (see Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). Juvenile titles again only slightly edged out non-juvenile books by a margin of 64% to 59.5%.

Breakdown by Grade



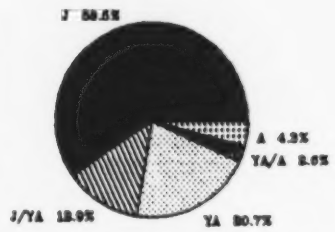


Fig. 6. Grade 5(n=150) Fig. 7. Grade 6(n=116)

It was interesting in the case of this particular question to look not only at how much of the total was represented by each of the categories but also at what the breakdown of juvenile vs. non-juvenile titles was. Most figures were very close. Ten-year-olds chose 67% J and

33% non-J. Eleven-year-olds chose 59.3% J and 40.6% non-J and 12-year-olds chose 64.3% J and 35.6% non-J. The girls chose 65.4% J and 34.6% non-J to the boys 56% J and 43.9% non-J. Similarly, the fifth and sixth graders were also very close (64% J to 59.5% J, respectively.) (See Fig. 8).

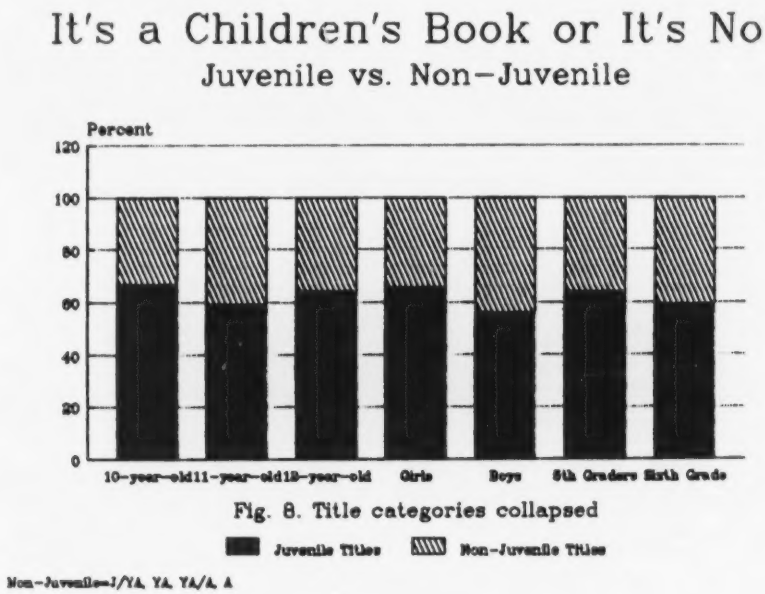


Fig. 8. Title categories collapsed

Department Preferences Listed

As was the case with the categories of books that the respondents listed, there was not much of a deviation in responses for preferences concerning favorite areas in the public library.

This question, by far, showed the clearest results in terms of what this age group wanted, if not what they were actually getting.

Overall, the split (clearly in favor of the Young Adult area) was 87.8% to 12.2%. Broken down by age, sex and grade, the gulf was very much the same.

By age, the 10 and 11-year-olds were very closely matched in their responses to the question of department preference (see Fig. 9). While the 10-year-olds chose

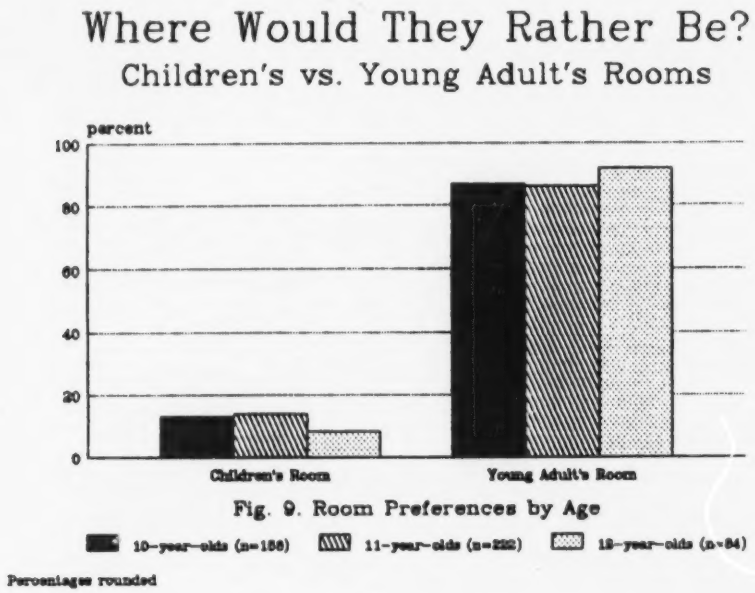


Fig. 9. Room Preferences by Age

YA by 86.7% and J by 13.2%, the 11 and 12-year-olds followed suit with 86% YA to 14% J and 91.7% YA to 8.3% J, respectively.

The boys and girls in the group were actually the closest in this matter, with their answers also very closely matching the outcome overall (see Fig. 10). Perhaps the only surprise here - or at least deviation from previous choices - was that more girls than boys (88.8% to 86.9%) chose YA.

According to the results, the girls preferred the children's room the least, 11.2% to 13.1% for the boys, but the difference between the groups was minor. Perhaps one explanation for this was provided by the large number of "series" books, like *Sweet Valley High*, which were very well represented in the listings and are usually found only in a young adult department. Due to the incredible popularity of these books, many students might be introduced to the YA collection as a whole.

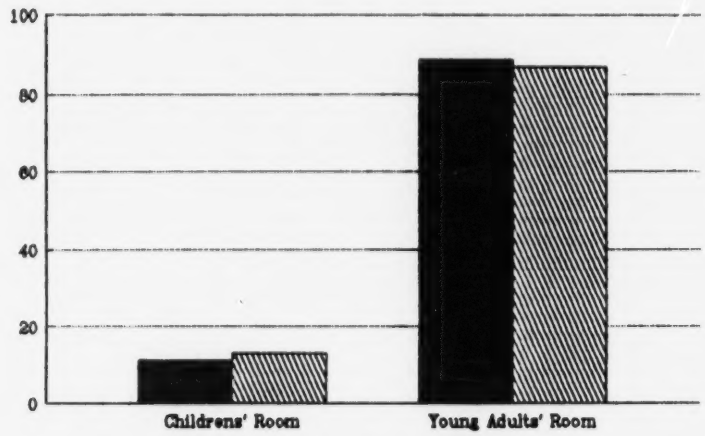


Fig. 10. Room Preferences by Sex

By grade, the numbers were almost the same as they were by sex (see Fig. 11). The sixth graders were the ones who least preferred the children's room (10.2% to 13.9%), which was probably to be expected since they are often the oldest.

Even at 10, though, they still did not seem to want to use the children´s room.

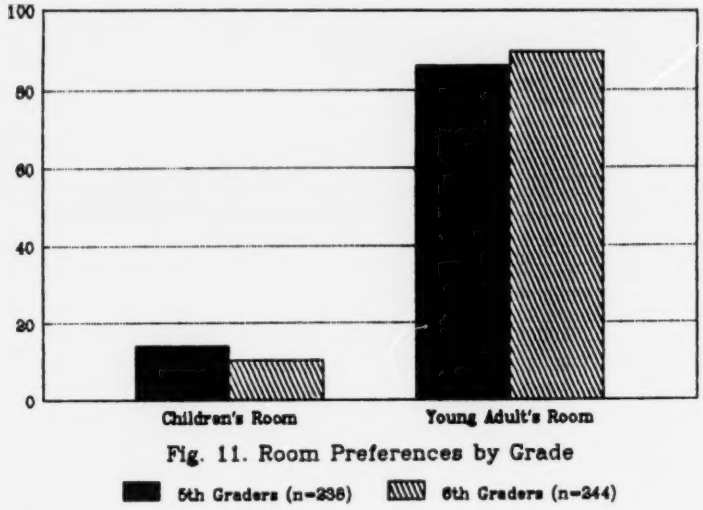


Fig. 11. Room Preferences by Grade

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

While many different arguments can be made as to "why" these youths feel so strongly about not wanting to use a library´s children´s room, only one thing really matters in the end - it IS their choice. If librarians, in striving to protect the established parameters of their areas, seek only to discount results such as these rather than face change and, perhaps, the surrendering of a piece of their audience, those patrons they are fighting over may simply leave and not come back.

Some professionals argue that choices like the ones illustrated in this study are not a direct reflection of

higher reading levels and maturation but just a chance for the kids to look and feel older. Why they feel this is not a good enough reason remains a mystery to many of their colleagues, who think any reason that might result in more young people using the library would be just.

So, whether they want to come in to read "harder" books or just to feel better about themselves and the fact that they are getting older, it would seem that, by giving them what they want, a larger number of pre-teens might end up being attracted to and using the library. Conversely, if the preferences of these youth are ignored, they might end up as patrons lost - from both rooms - for quite a while.

An argument might be made that, even though a majority of the students surveyed said they would like young adult materials, roughly half of them are actually checking out juvenile works - just as librarians had reasoned they would. However, as was also stated earlier, they may be doing this only because they think the YA room is off limits to them or because they prefer to stay with their peers.

Conditioning provided by everyone from their schools to their parents and even including the public librarians they encounter might all be combining to give them the message that certain areas are right for them and others are wrong.

More research in this area, for both the children and the libraries, is surely needed. A closer look at why books

that get checked out are selected and a closer look at why preferences are the way they are would also help in assessing whether changes in departmental structures might help.

The fact remains, though, that some work exists to be done in this area and should be done with an open mind. Very simple questions need to be answered before work to improve youth services in public libraries can begin. Consider, for example, a question even as basic as one posed by Mary R. Somerville: "What sixth grader want to sit in a kiddie chair to read?"[24]

Indeed, as she argues, "We need to ask the children and young adult's themselves what they want in the way of service."[25] The results, she continues, can help give libraries a stronger future. As she reported, Louisville Free Public Library Director William Ptacek once said, we should all hope "to build a library community for the long-term through kids."[26]

In one of her many commentaries on the area of youth services, young adult specialist Audrey Eaglen referred to a call from past ALSC president Mary Somerville, who said it is time that both juvenile and young adult librarians "take solid steps not merely to continue library services to youth but to re-energize them."[27]

Eaglen offered her own suggestion that one solution might be for all youth services divisions within ALA to come together to decide how best to serve the younger patrons in

the library. "Turf is not the issue at hand," she argued. "The issue is nothing less than excellence in service to young people - those to whom childrens, young adult and school librarians profer their strongest commitment."[28]

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire administered to students at Greenview Upper Elementary School..... [1]

Appendix B

Letter of permission from The South Euclid - Lyndhurst Board of Education..... [2]

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Notice of agreement from Ms. Gayle Brun, Greenview Librarian..... [3]

Appendix D

Script read to each class by Ms. Gayle Brun..... [4]

Appendix E

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Appendix F

A Bibliography: Materials recently selected from public libraries for pleasure by students at Greenview Upper Elementary School, South Euclid, Ohio.....[6-18]

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your birthdate? _____
Month Day Year

When you answer the next question, please don't count books you took out for school assignments.

2. What was the title of the last book you checked out of a public library?

_____

If you can remember the author's name, please put that down, too.

_____

Please circle the correct answer for the remaining questions.

3. Are you a: *Boy* *or* *Girl*

4. Are you a: *5th Grader* *or* *6th Grader*

5. If you went into a public library that had different rooms for different age groups, which do you think you'd most enjoy using?

Children's Room *Young Adult's Room*

[1]

APPENDIX B

I have reviewed the questionnaire created by Cathy Hakala-Ausperk and hereby give her permission to administer it to the fifth and sixth grade students at Greenview Upper Elementary School.

William C. Burcham
Director of Curriculum
South Euclid - Lyndhurst City Schools

10/25/91
Date

[2]

South Euclid-Lyndhurst
Public Schools

APPENDIX C

Memo

TO: Mrs. Catherine Hakala-Ausperk
FROM: Bill Burcham
RE:
DATE: October 25, 1990

Mrs. Brun has indicated her willingness to administer the questionnaire.

I wish you success in your research.

APPENDIX D

SCRIPT

A RESEARCH PROJECT IS UNDERWAY TO FIND OUT WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS CHILDREN YOUR AGE LIKE TO BORROW FROM PUBLIC LIBRARIES. WHEN YOU'RE FILLING OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE REMEMBER NOT TO INCLUDE ANY BOOKS THAT YOU HAD TO TAKE OUT FOR A SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT. THE PERSON CONDUCTING THIS SURVEY IS VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR COOPERATION. THIS SURVEY IS STRICTLY VOLUNTARY. IF ANYONE WOULD RATHER NOT COMPLETE IT, THEY DON'T HAVE TO.

APPENDIX E

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD

•••

Notice to Investigator
of
Initial Review of Project Application

Investigator's Name(s) Cathy Itakala - Ansperk

Project Title Are Young Adults Getting Younger?

•••

Federal and University regulations require that all research involving human subjects be reviewed in advance by the full Human Subjects Review Board, except for specific categories of research which may be approved through an expedited procedure (Level I and Level II). Results of the initial screening of your project application are indicated below. If there are any questions, please contact your reviewer or the Division of Research and Sponsored Programs, 233 Lowry Hall, telephone 672-2070. Upon formal approval, a copy of the signature page of your application will be sent to you or your advisor if you are a student.

____ **LEVEL III Review:**
Your project will be considered by the Human Subjects Review Board at its meeting on (Date)_____, starting at (Time) _____ in room 243 Lowry Hall. Following the meeting you will be notified as the Board's action by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

____ Your attendance at this meeting is optional.

____ You are strongly urged to attend this meeting in order to answer any questions about your project. If you are a student, your faculty advisor is also invited to attend.

____ **LEVEL II** - Project will be examined by a second reviewer.
You may begin your project when notified by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

✓ **LEVEL I** - Approved
You may begin your project immediately.

____ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS NEEDED BEFORE APPROVAL CAN BE GRANTED. (See comments)

Comments:

Dr. Jay — 11/28/90
Reviewer Date

APPENDIX F

A Bibliography: Materials recently selected from public libraries for pleasure by students at Greenview Upper Elementary School, South Euclid, Ohio

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FOOTNOTES

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